

126.
*The Blessedness of the Lamb's Guests
opened and proved :*

I N A

S E R M O N

From REVELATIONS xix. 9.

Occasioned by the DEATH of

Mrs. *SARAH ARNE.*

Published at the Request of those that heard it.

By JOSEPH DADLY.

L O N D O N :

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06.

W. Musgrave.

THE Stroke of Death, as it is most dreadful to some, so it is most acceptable to others; (a) *Better is the Day of their Death than the Day of their Birth*. For it is an Outlet from a World of Sorrow, and an Inlet to a World of compleat Happiness; but notwithstanding this, we may all consider Death with a Kind of Fear and Trembling, not merely because it will not be long 'ere we must feel his awful Stroke, but more especially upon the Account of our Consciousness that we must pass a strict Examination at the Tribunal of Heaven, when Death is over: But yet how short, how slight are Impressions of this Nature! 'Tis too, too often known, that the Goodness resulting from them is (b) like the Morning-cloud, and early Dew, and (c) *God may speak once, yea twice; and we perceive it not*; that is, never reap any solid Advantage for ourselves by such awful, melancholy Dispensations.

Solomon says, *That it is (d) better to go to the House of Mourning than the House of Feasting; for that is the End of all Men, and the living will lay it to Heart*: But then only a divine Power and Blessing can so effectually lay it to our Hearts, as that real Good may be gained by such Instances of Mortality. And God grant that our present assembling together may

(a) *Eccles. vii. 1.* (b) *Hos. vi. 4.* (c) *Job xxxiii. 14.*
 (d) *Eccles. vii. 2.*

be attended with such divine Efficacy ; and to this Purpose I shall read to you, and insist upon, by divine Assistance, that Passage, chose out by our deceased Friend, and Relative for this mournful Occasion, which is recorded in

R E V. xix. 9.

Blessed are they which are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.

In the Vision which St. *John* had of the pouring out of the fifth Vial upon the Seat of the Beast, we have not only prefigured before us the Destruction of *Rome*, *Pagan* or *Papal*, or both ; but we have also largely displayed before us the happy Consequences that would immediately follow ; and particularly, we are informed that this awful Ruin will be succeeded by the Assembling and Union of the Church of God, and furnish an Occasion for the Saints to join in Ascriptions of Praise for this just Vengeance of God. For this see the first Verse of this Chapter.

The four and twenty Elders in the fourth Verse falling down and worshipping God on this Account, may represent to us the heavenly Choir praising God, and giving an hearty *Amen* to these awful Proceedings of Justice.

The Voice of the great Multitude in the sixth Verse, is supposed to be the Church of God collected, consisting of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, it being imagined, not without sufficient Reason, that the *Jews* will be converted, and united to the Church before this Time : Tho' others think, that the Marriage in the seventh Verse, has a particular Reference to the Conversion of that People.

In the ninth Verse, which I have chosen for my Subject, the Apostle informs the drooping Minds of the Saints in what the true Blessedness of God's People

People consists, and when it shall be compleated. *Blessed are they that are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.* Those who understand by the Marriage of the Lamb the Conversion of the *Jews*, and that happy Period, when the Fulness of the *Gentiles*, with the Conversion of the *Jews*, shall form one glorious and Gospel Church, are, in my humble Opinion, chargeable with giving too mean and low an Interpretation ; for tho' there will be a great Deal of Glory and Happiness in that long wished for Period of Time, yet I cannot but perswade myself, that the Blessedness of an Admission to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb rises higher, and is nothing less than a different Way of expressing the Kingdom of Glory, where the Entertainment will be provided, the Marriage consummated, and the Saints called to sit with their Lord ; on which Account, it may in the highest and truest Sense be said, *Blessed are they which are called unto the Marriage Supper of the Lamb.* In the opening of these Words we may enquire,

- I. *Who is intended by the Lamb, and what by the Marriage.*
- II. *What is meant by the Supper, and what by the calling to it.*
- III. *Consider the blessedness of those that are admitted to the Marriage Supper.*
- IV. *Make some Reflections by way of Improvement.*

I. We are to enquire who is intended by the Lamb, and what by the Marriage.

I. We are to enquire who is the Person intended by the Lamb. And he is the Lord *Jesus Christ*, the Provision of God's infinite, unmerited Grace for fallen and miserable Man. It was he that was pointed at in the Answer *Abraham* gave to *Isaac's* Question,

tion, (a) *God will provide himself a Lamb for a Burnt-offering.* And without Doubt David had his Eye to *Christ* as the Lamb of God, when, looking beyond the typical Sacrifices under the Law, he introduces *Christ*, as speaking to his Father, in this Manner, (b) *Sacrifice and Offering thou didst not desire, mine Ears hast thou opened, Burnt-offering and Sin-offering hast thou not required, then said I, Lo I come, in the Volume of the Book it is written of me, I delight to do thy Will, O my God; yea, thy Law is within my Heart.* In this Character he was viewed by *John the Baptist*, his great Forerunner, who spake of him with this Note of Information, Observation, and Admiration (c), *Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the Sins of the World.* I might here show you, from plain Evidence, that the Lamb, under the Law, that was slain for a Sin-offering, was a typical Representation of *Christ*, the true Sacrifice for Sin; and show, that the Lambs offered under the Law correspond with *Christ* the Lamb of God, in their being Males out of the Flock without Blemish, &c. But I shall wave all these Observations, and endeavour to prove, that the Lamb mentioned in the Text, is none else than the Lord *Jesus Christ*, by the following Considerations. *I. This Lamb was viewed by John as unveiling the Mystery of the Seals.* (d) *And I saw,* says the Apostle, *when the Lamb opened one of the Seals.* Now, by this I cannot but persuade myself, that the Eminency, Importance, and Usefulness of *Christ's* prophetic Office are pointed out to us; thro' whom virtually, and by whom personally, the Will of God is imparted to us, agreeable to what the Psalmist declares, (e) *That he did not conceal the Loving-kindness of God, nor his Truth, but declared his Righteousness and Faithfulness to the great Congregation.* As the

(a) *Gen.* xxii. 8. (b) *Pf.* 40. 6, 7. (c) *John* i. 29.
(d) *Rev.* vi. 1. (e) *Pf.* xl. 9, 10.

Sun of Righteousness he has^r risen upon, and chased away that thick Darkness which lay upon our World. (a) *He is the true Light that lighteth every Man that comes into the World.* And the several Gradations of Light in the successive Ages of the World and Church are all owing to *Christ*; the Prophets, as they spake of him, so they spake by him: (b) *For no Man knows the Son but the Father, neither knoweth any the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.* (c) *And no Man hath seen God at any Time, the only begotten Son which is in the Bosom of the Father, he has declared him.* And this Office he has fulfilled with the greatest Integrity and Love; Integrity, in that there is nothing of the divine Will necessary to be known, which he has not revealed to us; Love, in that he behaved with the utmost Familiarity and Intimacy towards his Disciples. (d) *Henceforth I call you not Servants; for the Servant knows not what the Lord doth; but I have called you Friends; for all Things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you.*

2. This Lamb *John* (e) beheld as slain from the Foundation of the World; that is, in the Type, and also virtually, as in the Virtue and Credit of his after Sufferings and Satisfaction the Saints under the Old Testament were not only pardoned, but also admitted to eternal Glory. 'Tis *Christ*, and it is he only that appears above as the Lamb that had been slain, the Remembrance of whose Blood is acceptable, and the Application is efficacious. (f) *It speaketh better Things than the Blood of Abel.*

3. This Lamb was beheld by *John* as (g) invested with Power, as arrayed in Majesty, as one that is a

(a) *John* i. 9. (b) *Mat.* xi. 27. (c) *John* i. 18. (d) *John* xv. 15. (e) *Rev.* xiii. 8. (f) *Heb.* xii. 24. (g) *Rev.* xvii. 14.

Judge; and under this character he will ere long appear the Terror and Tormenter of *Antichrist*, and every one that dares oppose him. As *Antichrist* has drunk deep of the Blood of Saints and Martyrs, so in the Day of Recompence, *Christ* will put a Cup of Trembling into his Hands: (a) *The same shall drink of the Wine of the Wrath of God which is poured out without Mixture, and shall be tormented with Fire and Brimstone in the Presence of the holy Angels, and in the Presence of the Lamb, the Smoke of whose Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever.* And every unhappy Soul that has not been acquainted with *Christ*, nor felt the Influences of divine Grace, how high soever his Station in Life has been, must tremble before *Christ* as his Judge; his Countenance frowning in Vengeance will strike with Horror the most obdurate Wretch, and make him wish, but wish in vain he will, (b) *for a Shelter and Retreat from divine Wrath beneath the Weight of Rocks and Mountains.* (c) *Consider this ye that forget God, lest he tear you in Pieces, and there be none to deliver.*

4. This Lamb *John* viewed as enclosing all his People as his Care and Charge. The Names of those that will be saved at last are (d) enrolled in the Lamb's Book of Life; and tho' this Sentiment may be discarded and reproached in the present evil Days of Apostacy, yet there is the most solid Foundation in Scripture to support it, or *Christ* would never have made use of it with a Design to raise the Joy of the Disciples in the Manner he did. (e) *Notwithstanding in this rejoyce not that the Spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoyce because your Names are written in Heaven.*

5. This Lamb was seen by *John*, not only as the Object of Dread and Terror to wicked Men and Devils, but was also viewed by *John* as the Centre

(a) *Rev.* xiv. 10. 11. (b) *Rev.* v. 16, 17. (c) *Pf.* l. 22.
(d) *Rev.* xxi. 27. (e) *Luke* x. 20.

of the Worship of the (a) heavenly Host. As the only begotten Son, it was with this Order of Heaven that he was introduced into the World: (b) *Let all the Angels of God worship him.* And if this was the Command of Heaven when he came into the World in so much Contempt and Meanness, how much more Adoration and Praise is paid him now he is exalted in Heaven? He has also the Admiration and Entertainment of the redeemed Saints; they are represented as clothed in white Robes, and Palms in their Hands, crying out with a loud Voice, saying, (c) *Salvation to our God which sits upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb; and they sing not only (d) the Song of Moses, but the Song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous are thy Works, Lord God Almighty, just and true are thy Ways, O King of Saints.*

6. This Lamb John observed as the Light and Glory of the upper World; while the Rays of Divinity were eclipsed by his covering of Flesh, they shone with so strong a Lustre, that his (e) *Glory was beheld as the Glory of the only Begotten of the Father;* and while he tabernacled in Flesh, he was not only the Life, but the Light of Men; but in the Worlds of Happiness he will in Light and Glory far surpass the Sun in his Noon-day Brightness: And in this happy State there will be no Need for the created Glitter of the Sun and Moon, which are so vastly useful to our despicable Earth; for Christ, the Fountain of Light, will shed one eternal Noon throughout the blissful Regions, and reflect full Glory on all the Inhabitants, (f) *who shall see his Face, and his Name shall be on their Foreheads, and there shall be no Light there, nor Need of the Candle, neither Light of the Sun; for the Lord giveth them Light, and they shall reign for ever and ever;*

(a) Rev. vii. 11, 12. (b) Heb. i. 6. (c) Rev. vii. 10. (d) Rev. xv. 3. (e) John i. 14. John i. 4. (f) Rev. xxii. 4, 5.

and elsewhere is said, that the (a) *Lamb is the Light of this heavenly City.*

7. And lastly, This Lamb was represented to John as the Head, Husband, Redeemer, &c. of his People. (b) *And the Angel talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife; and he carried me away in the Spirit to a great Mountain, and shewed me that great City, the holy Jerusalem descending out of Heaven from God.* As he is their Head, they make Choice of him for their Guardian, rely upon his Care, and trust themselves to his Conduct; (c) *Their Character is, that they follow the Lamb wheresoever he goes.* As he is their Husband, he brings them to the Courts above, and celebrates the Marriage Supper with them, and will say to his smiling Father, (d) *Here am I, and those thou hast given me.* And as their Redeemer, he (e) *loved them, and gave himself for them,* and thought not his precious Blood too large a Sum to pay for the Redemption of them from eternal Slavery and Woe.

Having thus largely shown who it is intended by the Lamb, and the glorious Characters he sustains, I proceed to the second Branch of this Head, namely, to shew what is intended by the Marriage. Marriage, according to common Opinion, is a lawful joining of two together for Life, and implies not barely a mutual Consent to dwell and cohabit together in the near Relation of Husband and Wife, but a Conforinity to the primitive Design of Heaven, which runs thus; (f) *That a Man should leave his Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife, and they shall be one Flesh.* And upon the Account of the uniting of God and the holy Church by the Bond of sacred Worship, by the Purity of its Principles and Institutions founded upon divine Revelation,

(a) Rev. xxi. 23. (b) Rev. xxi. 9, 10. (c) Rev. xiv. 4.
(d) Heb. ii. 13. (e) Gal. ii. 20. (f) Gen. ii. 24.

God and his Church may be said to be united together in the Relations of Husband and Wife. If any enquire into the Nature and Effects of this Marriage, I would answer their Question, by shewing, 1. That in this Marriage there is a new Nature, or a Change of the old Nature in Believers by divine Grace: (a) *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature, old Things are passed away, and behold all Things are become new*; as in common Marriage there is an Alteration of Condition, so in this Marriage between Heaven and Earth there is an happy Change wrought in the Disposition of the Believer; *Christ* is now become the Centre, the Object of all the Saint's Desire and Love. (b) *Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none in Earth that I desire besides thee.* (c) *He is altogether lovely.* 2. This Marriage is an inviolable Marriage. The Knot thereof will never be loosed, nor a Divorce from him ever be allowed. As *Christ* is the first Husband, with whom it is better to abide than partially revolt; so the Language of *Christ's* Heart, and the Nature of the Contract are, (d) *that he will betroth the Church unto himself for ever; yea, that he will betroth her unto him in Righteousness, and in Judgment, and in Loving-kindness, and in Mercies, &c.* 3. In this Marriage *Christ* and Believers become one; as the Woman was a Part of the Man, so *Christ's* Spouse is a Part of himself; (e) *For we are Members of his Body, of his Flesh, and of his Bones.* And the Account that is given of our first Parents, that (f) *they two shall be one Flesh*, is equally true in a mystical Sense of *Christ* and the Church, which is thus accounted for by St. Paul, (g) *that it was a great Mystery; but he spake concerning Christ and the Church. Christ and his Spouse are one in Heart,*

(a) 2 Cor. v. 17. (b) Ps. lxxiii. 25. (c) Sol. S. v. 16.
 (d) Hos. ii. 19. (e) Eph. v. 30. (f) Gen. ii. 24. (g) Eph.
 v. 32.

one in Interest ; he that is joined to the Lord is become one Spirit. 4. *Christ* has the strongest Affection for his Spouse. What endearing Names does he address her with in the *Canticles*, *my Love, my Dove, my undefiled*, &c. (a) *He so loved the Church, as to give himself for it.* His Love was so great towards her that he espoused her Cause, and made himself answerable for the Debts she owed. What *Judah* said to *Jacob* concerning *Benjamin*, may, with great Propriety, be applied to *Christ*, speaking to his Father concerning his Church : (b) *If I bring her not unto thee, and set her before thee, let me bear the Blame for ever.* 5. And lastly, In this Marriage between *Christ* and his Church, there is a mutual Surrender. (c) *My beloved is mine, and I am his.* All that *Christ* is, is given to his Church, and all that the Church is, is yielded to *Christ*. Having thus passed several Observations on the Nature and Consequences of this Marriage, I proceed

II. To show what is meant by the Supper, and what by the calling to it. We are not to understand literally a Banquet or Entertainment prepared to be eat of by the Body ; no, that happy State and Place is not furnished with such Kind of Entertainments, which do not in the least suit with the Relish and Gust of the heavenly Inhabitants, and are not in the least needed ; for in the Resurrection they put off Mortality and Corruptibility, *and as Meats are for the Belly, and the Belly for Meats, God will then destroy it and them* ; and the Apostle gives us an Assurance, that though (e) *the Body is sown a natural one, yet it will be raised a spiritual Body.* Then we shall be like the Angels panting and breathing after refined Pleasures, such as are equal and worthy the enlarged Desires of an immortal

(a) *Acts* xx. 28. (b) *Gen.* xlii. 9. (c) *Sol.* S. ii. 16.
(d) *1 Cor.* vi. 13. (e) *1 Cor.* xv. 44.

Soul. There are two of those spiritual Entertainments with which *Christ* indulges his Saints. 1. There is the feeding upon *Christ* mystically and spiritually here on Earth. When our Lord, in his Converses with the *Jews*, claimed the Character of the Bread of Life, (a) *the living Bread that came down from Heaven*, and told them, *that he gave his Life for the World, and that he was the Author of Life to the World, and that without eating his Flesh, and drinking his Blood, they had no Life in them, nor any warrantable Claim to Life thro' him, or with him*; and laid before them the great Preference in regard to Virtue and Duration that he had over the *Manna* which *their Fathers* eat of in the *Wilderness*; I say, when *Christ* insisted upon these sublime Topicks, their un-sanctified Reason could not grasp the divine Mystery, but in the Language of Ignorance and Unbelief, they cried out, (b) *How shall this Man give us his Flesh to eat?* But tho' these divine and cheering Truths are unknown to, and unconceivable by the Men of this World, yet a true Christian views by Faith (c) *his Life hid with Christ in God*, and while he is in this Place of Distance, he has his Saviour to (d) *bring him into his banqueting House, while his Banner over him is Love*; and (e) *he sits under his Shadow with great Delight, and finds his Fruit is sweet to his Taste*. The Feast of his Love is full of Marrow, and of Wines on the Lees, well refined from all the ceremonial Dregs which formerly were mixed with them. The real Saint, while he is here, at some happier Hours of Communion with Heaven, (f) *is abundantly satisfied with the Fatness of his House, and he drinks of the River of his Pleasure, (g) the Streams whereof make glad the City of God*. And tho' these reviving Entertainments are seldom

(a) *John* vi. 50-7-59. (b) *John* vi. 52. (c) *Col.* iii. 3.
 (d) *Sol.* S. ii. 3, 4. (e) *Is.* xxv. 6. (f) *Pf.* xxxvi. 8.
 (g) *Pf.* xlvi. 4.

credited, and seldomer experienced in the present evil Days of Degeneracy and Lukewarmness; yet without them Religion would deserve no better a Name than a Drudgery, the Christian would be sunk in constant Dejection, and the Wheels of Devotion would drive on heavily.

2. There is an Entertainment which is reserved for the Upper World. And oh! How far superiour is this to that which we enjoy here. Here Happiness is in its first Beginnings, there it will be consummated and compleated. (a) *Here the loving Kindness of God is better than Life*; to experience it is delicious and satisfying, and affords Occasion for the greatest Transports of Joy; but when we are seated in the Presence of God, there (b) *is a Fulness of Joy, and there are Rivers of Pleasure*; and for this large Abundance the heavenly Soul is always panting, and with David cries out, (c) *But as for me I will behold thy Face in Righteousness, I shall be satisfy'd when I awake in thy Likeness*.

2. We are to shew what is meant by the Calling to partake of this Supper. There is an external Call of Men, to attend to the Word and Ordinances as a moral Act, and a reasonable Duty, founded on the Relation of God's being the supreme Being, and we Subjects accountable to him: There is likewise an external Call informing of us in a doctrinal or rational Way, what is necessary we should be, and what is requisite to do, in order that we might experience Peace and Satisfaction here, and eternal Salvation hereafter. But besides this, there is an internal or effectual Call by Grace; which, as to Time, Manner, Circumstance, and Degrees of Evidence, may admit of large Variation, and yet, as to Reality, it answers the De-

(a) *Pf. lxiii. 3.* (b) *Pf. xvi. 11.* (c) *Pf. xvii. 15.*

scription of (a) *being called by Grace, and a Revelation of Christ* to the Soul, not in Word only, but in Power, in such a Way of Demonstration, as that the Message is received in *Faith, Love, (b) and much Assurance* : But I must not enlarge here.

The Call then to the Supper of the Lamb will not only be the last, but also the best Call we can possibly expect ; it is ^{to} be distinguished from the powerful Call of Christ as a Judge to the Wicked, when he awakes them from the Sleep of Death, and bids them arise from their Graves and appear at his Bar, for *the (c) Hour is coming, when all that are in the Graves shall hear the Voice of the Son of God, and come forth* ; tho' the Resurrection of this All, will issue in Effects widely different ; *these must arise to receive their final Condemnation, and to undergo (d) Shame and everlasting Contempt*, and how dreadful the Call that rouses them from their Sleep ; these must arise in the Virtue of *Christ* as Judge. While those happy Few, if compared with the rest, that are espoused to *Christ*, will be raised in the Virtue of *Christ*, as an Head an Husband : And the Manner how this will be, is largely described by St. Paul, *(e) that the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a Shout, with the Voice of the Archangel, and the Trump of God : And the dead in Christ shall rise first* : (*i. e.* before the Saints that are then actually alive upon the Earth shall be changed). Here we may observe the great Preference given to the Bride of *Christ*, over what is allowed to the Wicked : And when these happy Saints are thus raised, then *Christ* will pronounce these Words of true substantial Comfort upon them : *(f) Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you, be-*

(a) Gal. i. 15. 16. (b) 1 Thess. i. 5. (c) John v. 28. 29.

(d) Dan. xii. 2. (e) 1 Thess. iv. 15. (f) Matt. xxv. 34.

fore the Foundation of the World; and no sooner will the awful delightful Solemnities of Judgment be finish'd, but the Bride will ascend triumphantly to Heaven with her affectionate Bridegroom, and an angelick Host attending, where the delicious Entertainment of the Supper is prepared, the Nuptials solemnized, and she shall sit down, and enjoy the Feast with unspeakable Pleasure and Satisfaction. But I hasten thro' these delightful Considerations, and proceed

3. To consider the Blessedness of those that are admitted to the Marriage Supper. And this will appear by the Consideration of the Bridegroom of the Church. And this Person is no less than the (a) mighty Redeemer and Lord of Hosts, who is immortal in our Nature, and tho' he once died upon the accursed Tree for us, yet he now reigns in full Glory above for our Benefit. He is likewise immutable, his Resolutions never vary, his Affections never chill, but remain thro' a long Eternity, as strong and as kind as ever they were; (b) *Jesus Christ, the same Yesterday, to Day, and for ever*: He is the Fountain of Love and Compassion; in all their Afflictions he was afflicted, and tho' they, while at a Distance from his Throne, often gave Occasion for awful Resentments by their Neglects of Duty, and Commissions of Sin, yet he still bore with them, and healed their Backslidings. *Christ* is munificent; He bestows himself with all that he has that is communicable upon them: The Church can make no Boasts of her Birth and Parentage, of her noble Blood, and honourable Relatives, of large Riches, and high Honours, having lost all that was truly valuable in her Apostacy at first; but *Christ* stoops so low as to make (c) *himself poor*,

(a) *If.* liv. 5. (b) *Heb.* xiii. 8. (c) *2 Cor.* viii. 9.

and (a) of *no Reputation*, to give us durable Riches and large Honours; nay, to speak all in a Word, (b) *we are Heirs of God, and Joint-heirs with Christ*. 2. The Blessedness of the Lamb's Guests arises from the large Collection; and happy Union of all the Saints who together make up the Bride of the Lamb, they will be gathered (c) *from the four Winds of Heaven*, and (d) *will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of God*; there will be the most numerous and splendid Appearance. St. John, after he had beheld each of the Tribes of Israel, sealed (e) *twelve thousand*, saw a number which no Man could number, clothed with white Robes, and Palms in their Hands; and yet tho' they are such a prodigious Company, they make up but one intire Bride of one Heart, as if they were but one Person; they are happy in the Enjoyment of the Object of their highest and united Love, in which they fear no Rivals, entertain no unworthy Suspicions, find not so much as the most distant Motions of Envy or Discontent. No, this Family is well guarded from intestine Quarrels and Contentions, and enjoys perfect Peace and full Satisfaction in the large Effusions of divine Love shed down upon it, and the grateful Returns that they make of Love and Gratitude. 3. The Blessedness of the Lamb's Guests may be proved from the Manner of their Appearance, and that will be in the greatest Lustre and Perfection of Beauty, both external and internal: Their Bodies will be awakened from their dusty Beds strong and immortal, no more to feel Decay and Death; and what gives the largest Honour to them, is the Resemblance that their Bodies will have to the glorified Body of their exalted Head and Husband the Lord Jesus Christ, (f) *according to the mighty Power whereby he is able to subdue all*

(a) *Phil. ii. 7.* (b) *Rom. viii. 17.* (c) *Mat. xxiv. 31.*
 (d) *Mat. viii. 11.* (e) *Rev. vii. 8, 9.* (f) *Phil. iii. 21.*

Things unto himself. And as the Souls of the Saints, as soon as they were dismissed from their Tenements of Clay, ascended to God, to the happy and perfect Regions above ; so when they descend from their blissful Mansions, to resume and inhabit their Bodies again, their Souls will come out of Heaven perfumed *as out of the Ivory Palaces, with a strong Scent of Heaven upon them,* and adorned with the Glory of God ; and then taking up their Bodies, they will re-enter the blessed Abodes, and be brought to the King (a) *all glorious within, their Clothing of wrought Gold, and their Raiment of Needle-work, and thus they shall sit down to the rich Entertainments of the Marriage-supper.* 4. And lastly, The Blessedness of the Lamb's Guests chiefly consists in the beatific Vision, and full Fruition of God, and the Lamb their Husband in the Courts above. The Happiness of that State and Place surmounts our most diligent Searches, and most elevated Descriptions ; for (b) *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him.* The Pens and Tongues of the most excellent and learned Men on the Face of the Earth, and the pure enlarged Capacity of the highest Angel in Heaven, must fail and falter, when the over-matching Theme of the Saints Happiness, or the heavenly Glory is attempted : *We (c) know but in Part,* and that little we do know is *thro' a Glass darkly.* St. John might well say, (d) *We know not what we shall be,* or after what Manner perfectly we shall live in the World above ; for the imperfect Glances of Faith are much inferior to the full Vision of God ; and if ever we set our now feeble and trembling Footsteps in this happy World, we shall acknowledge that the Half of God's Glory was not

(a) *Pf. xlv. 8, 13, 14.* (b) *1 Cor. ii. 9.* (c) *1 Cor. xiii. 12.* (d) *1 John iii. 2.*

told to, or comprehended by us, while in this State of Distance, Imperfection and Darknesh. For,

1. This Vision will be deeply affecting, for we shall see him Face to Face, and see him as he is, not as God essentially, but personally and gloriously thro' this God-Man Mediator, who will then reflect a Lustre upon his Spouse throughout the Ages of an happy and never-ceasing Eternity, who will be distinguished by the full Blaze of Glory, as much as the Sun is known from the twinkling Stars; and tho' God, being infinite, cannot be grasped, or perfectly comprehended by a finite narrow Mind, yet in the Worlds above he will be seen and enjoyed according to the largest Extent of finite Minds: The Vision and Enjoyment of him as such, will yield the highest Delight and Satisfaction; and if *Christ* was to say to the Inhabitants of the upper World, "Take Heaven amongst you, but as for me, I am determined to leave you;" the Saints would change their Joy into Sorrow, and would, with Tears, eccho back to such mournful News, "Lord, Heaven will be no Heaven to us except thou thyself art there; thou art the better Half of Heaven; and, Lord, if a Sight of thee thro' the Medium or Glas of thy Word and Ordinances below excited our Love to thee, certainly to see thee in this happy Place, must give us the greatest Transport, and we can never think of parting with thee." Perfect Rest and unmingled Satisfaction are not to be found amongst us here, nor are they the Product of the Creatures: We may search over the whole Volume of Creation, but still all is unsufficient to give Content to the Mind; and after our earnest and diligent Endeavours, we cry out with the wise Man, *(a) Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity.* Nay, a true Satisfaction is not found in the most noble Engagements of our Souls

(a) *Eccles. i. 2.*

in the religious Life; for often their God and Saviour withdraws his comfortable Presence, and leaves them to complain and mourn under such a melancholy Dispensation; but when the Morning of the Resurrection dawns upon us, there will not only be a perfect Assimilation to him, but likewise a full satisfying Vision of him; (a) *as for me, says David, I will behold thy Face in Righteousness, I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy Likeness.* (b) *The Lamb which is in the midst of the Throne shall feed them, and lead them to living Fountains of Water.* 2. There will not only be an intellectual, but also an organical Sight. Christ will be beheld by us with strong immortal Eyes. After the gloomy Night of Death is over, and we have shook off the Dust of the Grave, *in this Flesh we shall see God.* And Job expresses himself with a full Satisfaction and Assurance that this would be his Case, when he cries out; (c) *I know that my Redeemer lives, and that he shall stand at the latter Day on the Earth; and tho' after my Skin Worms destroy this Body, yet in my Flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine Eyes shall behold, and not another.* So that we find that as our Bodies shall be admitted; as well as Souls, to the heavenly State, so the Members of this Body shall share in the Blessedness of it. All that we can receive shall be bestowed upon us. 3. And lastly, It will be an everlasting Vision and uninterrupted Enjoyment; it will not be transient and short as the Visits of Grace to us, and the Visits of our Souls to God are here in this State of Distance; no, but in the upper World we shall not only be the Ornaments, but also the Inhabitants of that blissful Place: (d) *So shall we be ever with the Lord.* Here will be celebrated an everlasting Sabbath that hath no Night; (e) *they shall see his Face, and his Name shall be on their Foreheads,*

(a) *Pf. xvij. 15.* (b) *Rev. vii. 17.* (c) *Job xix. 25, 26, 27.* (d) *1. Thess. iv. 17.* (e) *Rev. xxii. 4, 5.*

and there shall be no Night there. And if the Sight of him by Faith affords the sweetest Experiences of Joy and Transport, how divine the Delight when the Enjoyment of our God shall never be interrupted, and our full Vision of him never be intercepted? O how delightful is the Thought of *our being Pillars in the House of God, and going out no more, and taking and eating of the Tree of Life in the midst of the Paradise of God.* O how ravishing is the Contemplation, that there will be *no (a) more Death, no more Sorrow, no more Crying, no more Pain!* How sweet will it be to have Faith turned into eternal Sight, Hope swallowed up in eternal Fruition; Songs, everlasting Songs, taken on our Lips instead of Prayers; And Groans and Tears, which disturbed us so long here, changed away for immortal Transport and Triumph.

The Application.

1. We may hence see the Necessity of a Call by Grace, upon the Account of a Man's not being able to receive a warrantable Claim, and find a real Meetness for Glory, *(b) except he be born again.* Without the Wedding-garment, and the white Robe, which is the Righteousness of the Saints if it were possible for us to enter into Heaven, we should be put to a Blush and eternal Silence at that awful Question, *(c) Friend, how camest thou in hither, not having on the Wedding-garment?* 2. The Consideration of this Marriage-union gives a solid Foundation of Comfort in our Prospects of Death, and calms the swelling Grief of our Minds, when we see any of our Relatives or Friends snatched away by Death. And this Composure of Mind, I hope, may be felt by the weeping Friends and Relations

(a) Rev. xxi. 4. (b) John iii. 3. (c) Mat. xxii. 12.

of our deceased Sister, cut off in the Flower of her Days.

It is neither my Province nor Practice to bestow large Encomiums on the Dead, yet I may with Justice and Modesty say, that, to the best of my Knowledge, our deceased Sister was a respectful Friend, a dutiful Child, and faithful Servant, and a pious Person. She had, as I learn from an Account of her Experience, very great and fair Evidences of her being interested in the Favour of God, by the various and happy Effects produced in her by the Preaching of Mr. *Harper* of *Sharnbrook*, Mr. *Bower* of *Shepton*, Mr. *Drake* of *Yardly*, Mr. *Sanderson* of *Bedford*, Mr. *Gates* of *Gamlingay*. (I mention those Names in the Order observed in her Experience.) And last of all, she mentions my Usefulness to her in spiritual Affairs. Thus had she a blessed Hope in Life; but towards the Moments of Death, when her rational Powers recovered themselves a little from the Violence of the Fever, she expressed her Confidence in God, and a Meetness for an Appearance in the eternal World. After this, without a Sigh or Groan, she yielded up her Spirit, fetcht out of her Body as it were by a Kiss of God, as the *Jewish* Rabbies are used to express the Manner of *Moses* Death. Thus, I hope, she is not lost, but sweetly fallen asleep in *Jesus*, and such God will at length bring with him.

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